

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 08986 170938Z  
ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4216  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE  
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 8986

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LONDON FOR ATHERTON, SUANDERS AND AMB EILTS  
BONN FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

FROM AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, IS, US, EG  
SUBJECT: WEIZMAN ON THE TIGHT ROPE

1. AT CONCLUSION OF WEIZMAN'S LENGTHY DEBRIEFING ON HIS MEETING WITH SADAT AT SALZBURG (SEPTTEL, WE TALKED ALONE FOR ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES ABOUT HIS EXTREMELY DELICATE POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CORSS-CURRENTS RUNNING SO STRONGLY HERE IN THE WAKE OF THE LAST WEEK'S EVENTS. HE IS GENUINELY A VERY TROUBLED MAN.
2. WEIZMAN UNDERSTANDS THAT SADAT IS USING HIM, AND PERES AS WELL, TO UNDERMINE BEGIN'S CABINET IN THE HOPES OF SEEING ONE OR THE OTHER EMERGE AS PRIME MINISTER OF A NEW COALITION. HE DOES NOT DENY THAT HE WOULD BE HARDLY ADVERSE TO BEING PRIME MINISTER, BUT HE IS ANYTHIN  
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BUT CERTAIN THAT A REVAMPED GOVERNMENT WITHOUT BEGIN WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE PEACE ALONG THE LINES OF SADAT'S APPARENT REQUIREMENTS, MUCH LESS SELL THE AGREEMENT TO THE ISRAELI PEOPLE WITH BEGIN IN ACTIVE OPPOSITION. HE CLAIMS HE HAS NOT TALKED WITH PERES ABOUT ANY SUCH NEW COALITION PROSPECTS, AND INSISTS THAT IF BEGIN IS UNDERMINED AND FORCED OUT OF OFFICE IN SOME WAY OR OTHER THAT HE, WEIZMAN, IS FAR

MORE LIKELY TO END UP FINISHING HIS NEW HOUSE IN CAESAREA THAN PARTICIPATING IN AN ALTERNATE GOVERNMENT. (I TAKE THAT DEMURRER HOWEVER WITH A LARGE BOX OF SALT.)

3. WIEZMAN IS PERSUADED COMPLETELY THAT SADAT MUST DEAL WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AS A GOVERNMENT; HE CANNOT BE THE ONLY THREAD HOLDING THE NEGOTIATIONS TOGETHER IF HE AND THE THREAD ARE BOTH NOT TO SNAP. HE DESCRIBED THE JULY 16 CABINET MEETING IN COLORFUL TERMS. MUCH OF IT WAS APPARENTLY DEVOTED TO VERY STRONG ATTACKS BY SHARON AND HURWITZ IN PARTICULAR ON SADAT'S TACTICS AND WEIZMAN'S ROLE. THERE IS, HE SAYS, A VERY GREAT SENSE OF INDIGNATION IN THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT SADAT'S SEEMING DETERMINATION TO DESIGNATE ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WITH WHOM HE WILL DO REAL BUSINESS, AND THE CABINET WILL NOT PLAY THE GAME. BEGIN IS DEEPLY WOUNDED BY SADAT'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ATTACKS ON HIM, AND DAYAN ALMOST EQUALLY OFFENDED AND EMBITTERED BY THE OBVIOUS TACTICS SADAT IS EMPLOYING. WEIZMAN MADE CLEAR SEVERAL TIMES IN THE CONVERSATION THAT HE WAS VERY DOUBTFUL THE CABINET WOULD APPROVE HIS RETURNING ALONE TO MEET WITH SADAT IN ALEXANDRIA AFTER THE LONDON MEETINGS. NOR, HE SAID, WILL HE ARGUE THE CASE FOR FURTHER PRIVATE SESSIONS AGAINST THOSE IN THE CABINET WHO BITTERLY ATTACK HIM AS "SADAT'S MAN IN ISRAEL."

4. THE ONE BRIGHT SPOT IS THAT WEIZMAN HAD A LONG  
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PRIVATE SESSION WITH DAYAN LAST NIGHT (SATURDAY) IN WHICH HE MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO REBUILD COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO. HE IS PROPOSING THAT THE GOI SET UP A GENUINE NEGOTIATING TEAM, HEADED BY DAYAN, TO INCLUDE HIMSELF AND YADIN AT LEAST TO CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS, AT EL ARISH OR ELSEWHERE. UNLESS SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS DONE, WEIZMAN IS FILLED WITH FOREBODINGS.

5. WEIZMAN SAYS THAT BEGIN IS STEADILY REVERTING, UNDER THE PERSONAL BARBS COMING FROM CAIRO, TO HIS FORMER SELF--FILLED WITH DEFIANCE AND THE OVERTONES OF A MASSADA COMPLEX WHICH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LATENT BUT WERE LARGELY ABSENT FROM HIS OUTLOOK FOR MANY WEEKS AFTER SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM. SHARON IS PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS ROLE VIA-A-VIS BEGIN, EXERCISING THE UNDENIABLE INFLUENCE OVER BEGIN WHICH STEMS FROM BEGIN'S ADMIRATION FOR HIS AS A MILITARY LEADER AND MANY SHARED CONVICTIONS ABOUT THE INALIENABLE NATURE OF ISRAEL'S ROLE IN THE WEST BANK. WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE HAD MADE SOME EFFORT TO TRY TO CO-OPT SHARON TO A MORE MODERATE LINE BUT HAD BEEN DOUBLECROSSED REPEATEDLY IN RESPONSE. HE SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS HE HAD DECIDED NOT TO RESIGN FROM THE CABINET IN JUNE WHEN HE DISAGREED SO STRONGLY OVER THE ANSWERS TO THE "AMERICAN QUESTIONS,

"

WAS HIS FEAR AND INDEED HIS CONVICTION THAT SHARON WOULD BE NEMED  
DEFENSE MINISTER WERE HE TO LEAVE THE JOB.

6. WEIZMAN SAID THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING PRESIDENT CARTER  
COULD DO IN THIS CURRENT SITUATION WOULD BE TO  
SOMEHOW GET ACROSS TO SADAT THAT HE HAD TO DEAL WITH THE  
BEGIN GOVERNMENT AS A GOVERNMENT AND NOT RELY WHOLLY ON  
WEIZMAN, A TACTIC WHICH WAS BOUND TO LEAD BOTH SADAT AND  
WEIZMAN TO GREIF. IF SADAT WILL NOT SEE DAYAN ALONE, THEN THE  
EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO GET HIM TO DEAL WITH WEIZMAN AND DAYAN AS  
A TEAM IN SOME FASHION.

7. IT WAS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT SADAT'S EUPHORIA ABOUT HIS  
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SESSIONS WITH WEIZMAN AND PERES AND THE SENSE OF  
INEVITABILITY ABOUT A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT HERE WHICH  
HE PROJECTED IN HIS CONVERSATION YESTERDAY WITH EILTS  
HARDLY SQUARES WITH WEIZMAN'S ASSESSMENT. YET, WEIZMAN  
FOUND MANY POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THIER MEETING AND AGREED  
WITH ME THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE WAYS IN  
WHICH THE JIGSAW PUZZLE COULD STILL BE PUT TOGETHER, IF  
ONLY THE PLAYERS DO NOT CHOOSE TO PLAY THE WRONG PIECES.  
HE IS BOTH EXHILARATED BY SOME OF WHAT OCCURRED IN SALZBURG,  
AND AT THE SAME TIME CONVINCED THAT THE GAME CANNOT  
BE WON BY THE CONTINUED PUBLIC DENIGRATION OF BEGIN AND TO A  
LESSER EXTENT DAYAN WITH ALL THE EMPHASIS BEING PUT  
ON HIM. IF THERE IS ANYTHING AT ALL WHICH THE U.S. CAN  
DO TO CHANGE SADAT'S STYLE, WEIZMAN PLEADES THAT WE TRY TO DO SO.  
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